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ABSTRACT

One of the main tenets of the audio-lingual theory which has dominated most of our thinking in foreign language teaching methodology for the last fifteen years is that students should never be put in the situation of having to say something for which they have not already learned the patterns. Is the language laboratory really useful, however, in developing communicative competence? A research project was carried out at the University of Illinois involving three beginning French classes. The control group had one hour a week in the language laboratory in addition to four classroom hours. The two experimental groups, E1 and E2, substituted other activities for the laboratory. E2 had free discussion in English of various aspects of French culture, while E1 had unstructured oral communication in French. At the end of the semester the students were given tests especially designed to evaluate their communicative competence. These tests were graded by native speakers of French who did not speak any English. The results of E1 were significantly better. The results on standardized tests which measure reading and listening skills were approximately the same for all groups. Some examples of ways to implement the communicative skills program are play-acting, role-playing, and games. (CFM)

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LECTURE ON COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE*

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Before we begin I would like to know just a little bit about you. How many of you here are in secondary schools - junior or senior high schools? About half of you. That's pretty good. And how many of you are at this or another university? Another 40 per cent. Good. There are probably some others that I've missed, but that gives me a good idea of what your interests are. University people are usually happy with some theories and a few statistics, but high school people live in a very real world. Whether they're from Missouri or Kentucky, they want to be shown. And so I'll try to do something for each of you this afternoon.

When I was coming of age in this profession in the 1960's, audio-lingualism was just beginning to come into its own. As most of you know, it is audio-lingual theory which has dominated most of our thinking in foreign language teaching methodology for the last fifteen years. One of the main tenets of the audio-lingual method is that students should never be put in the situation of having to say something for which they have not already learned the patterns. In other words, we should do everything we can to keep them from making mistakes. Therefore we work with very limited amounts of material, have students memorize or repeat until their patterns become correct and automatic, and somehow or other these patterns are supposed to be transferred into real-life situations where students remember and use them for interaction with native speakers of the language.

So it was this thinking, and my own experience as a French teacher with students who did very well with patterns and yet were incapable when confronted with a real-life situation, which led me to consider this approach. I had also found many professors were very good at teaching phonetics and syntax, but were at a loss for words when confronted with a live Frenchman. These failures led me to question this basic tenet of audio-lingualism and to launch into a research project which would test an assumption that I had. I believed if students were given an opportunity to use the language that they were learning from the very outset, from the very first weeks of class, in real-life interactions, honest conversation, spontaneous communication, if you will, that it would aid greatly in developing what I and others have termed "communicative competence." And it would not in any way detract from what I call a "linguistic competence" - learning the basic grammar and pronunciation rules, etc. In other words, I felt that using the language from the outset would not necessarily result in errors that would be impossible to eradicate at a later date.

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Let us consider the findings of our research project. The study ran for an eighteen week (one semester) period. I worked with several beginning French classes at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. We have a multi-section program with as many as twenty or twenty-five beginning sections in basic French. Those of you who are teachers of French might be familiar with the Harris and Leveque textbook, Basic Conversational French, which was in use at the time. It represents a modified audio-lingual approach with dialogues, pattern drills, and so forth. The language laboratory was an integral part of the course. Students went to class four days a week for an hour, and then spent a fifth period in the language laboratory, rehearsing the dialogues, pattern drills and exercises that had been presented in class.

Three groups were involved in this experiment. Group C (C stands for control group) was the group which did what all the other groups not involved in the experiment did. That is, they went to the language laboratory for that fifth hour. Then there were two experimental groups: E_1 and E_2. A classroom teacher worked with these students to provide them with the same basic program in French, so that I was involved for only one hour per week with these two groups. The E_2 group I describe as a culture group. It shared all kinds of very interesting cultural experiences. The students saw movies, and had social gatherings with native French students. There were occasions to learn something about the social and political life in France - all the kinds of things that French teachers normally include in one way or another in the hopes of interesting their students and providing a broader cultural context for the language. We did nothing with language during these fifty minute per week sessions. There was no French involved in the cultural experiences whatsoever. Even the encounters with native students were all in English.

The other group, experimental group E_1, was what I call the communicative skills group. In this group we immediately began to talk about what it means to communicate. How do you express yourself in another language? Do you know people who speak English as a second language? Do you have problems understanding them? Is their grammar perfect? What bothers you? What gets in the way of your communication? And as it turned out, we discovered together that it wasn't always syntactical precision or an absolutely accurate pronunciation that determined whether or not one could communicate and enjoy interacting with this other person. Therefore, if you're learning French, you don't need to be absolutely precise in terms of grammar or pronunciation. What counts is making the effort and using every resource at your disposal to put yourself across to the other person. What I hoped was that through this understanding, the students would be more relaxed about trying something which was, after all, new, very difficult, and likely to produce tension.

We attempted in the first weekly sessions to follow, more or less, the situations that were outlined in the dialogues that they had learned from their textbooks, although I made no reference to the textbook, as such. If, for example, the textbook presented a situation in a railroad station with a dialogue about finding one's way to a city, we would reproduce that kind of situation in our encounters, and I would say, "Pretend that I'm the station master and you want to find your way to

Paris, or you want to find out about train schedules." Therefore, some relationship existed between what they found in their textbooks and what we did in our sessions. Later on, however, they got bored with role playing and embroidering on situations that they'd found in their textbooks. They wanted to talk about things like the drug problem in Grenoble, student activism in France, sorority dances on campus. Whatever they were interested in we talked about in French. Sometimes my best clue as to what interested them was what they were talking about when I came into the room. I talked with them in English, so that they got to know me. If there was something they were discussing, I'd say, "That's interesting. Now let's try to do that in French." And that was our starting point. I wasn't concerned at all with the errors that they were making or whether or not they had the patterns they needed to express themselves. If there were things that they wanted to say, they could ask me how to say them. They knew that I spoke English; I knew that they spoke English. We were all doing this together and having some fun, so there was no reason in the world why they couldn't ask me, "How do you say this in French?"

One of the things that emerged very quickly was their need for some of the face-saving expressions that we use even in our native language when we're communicating with people: "um," "let's see," "I mean that,"...little words to let you pause, regain your composure and think about how you're going to say what you want to say next. These were things they asked me for, and I provided them right away. Neither was I concerned in my exchanges with them about remaining within the vocabulary and the structures that they'd had. In fact, I didn't pay too much attention to what they'd had in their textbook. I believe the most important technique you need to learn when you're learning a second language is how to handle situations when you don't know everything that's being said; when you don't understand. I don't care if you've studied a language for two weeks or two years...or twenty years, for that matter. You don't know <u>all</u> the language. Still today, if someone is talking about aeronautical engineering, I'm going to be at a loss for words in French. It's situations and contexts that are going to determine just how comfortable you're going to be. So, you've got to have ways of finding out what you don't understand, getting people to repeat, explain - these kinds of techniques.

I'm going to use somebody here in the audience as a guinea pig. I understand you have a linguist who speaks lots of languages. I asked him earlier today if he spoke French and he said, "<u>un peu</u>," so that's good enough for me. Dr. St. Clair, would you come up? You see, I'm going to smile and be very unthreatening. We don't care if you know any French. We're going to pretend that I'm a concierge. Concierges are people who oversee the operation of apartment buildings and collect the mail, and so forth. Some are very friendly and others are not so pleasant, and you never know which kind you're going to encounter. But if you're visiting in France for very long and you're expecting any mail, you do have to go by the concierge's to collect your mail. So, you try that. See if you can get your mail from me.

St. Clair: Excusez-moi.

Savignon: Bonjour, Monsieur.

St. Clair: Pouvez vous m'aider? Y a-t il une carte pour moi?

Savignon: Une carte? Vous voulez dire une carte? Quelle sorte de carte voulez-vous?

St. Clair: Une carte des Etats-Unis.

Savignon: Ah! Du courier. Vous voulez savoir s'il y a du courier pour vous? Comment vous appelez-vous, Monsieur?

St. Clair: (Jokingly) Robert St. Clair, un nom Espagnol, pas Francais.

Savignon: Bien, c'est bien. Ecoutez, je vais regarder. Eh, voilà. Bon! Ecoutez, Monsieur, vous devez avoir beaucoup d'amis des Etats-Unis, parce qu'il y a deux cartes postales et une lettre pour vous. Voilà, Monsieur.

St. Clair: Merci boucoup.

Savignon: Au revoir, Monsieur.

That's not bad at all. He's really better than he let on.

You can imagine the scene with students who've had very little French. Maybe they've had a dialogue with a few words like courier, poste, bonjour madame...they know these things, but they've never seen a real Frenchman or anyone pretending to be a real Frenchman. As an illustration, the Communicative Skills Group was having its first meeting. The students had had a dialogue with monsieur, madame, mademoiselle, and a few other words...bonjour, au revoir I'm sure they'd had. I explained to them that in French there were many kinesics - gestures, facial expressions, and so forth - that one could use to help put himself at ease and make himself at least look like he might be French, even though he doesn't know what to say. As an example, I explained about shaking hands: that in France when one is introduced to someone, he puts out his hand and shakes hands. Then I said, "Let's just try saying hello. You've learned the words." There was one girl who looked particularly bright and extroverted, so I said, "Would you like to try?" She walked to the front of the room, came over to me, put out her hand and said,"Bonjour, Monsieur," and then turned bright red! She knew immediately that she'd said the wrong word. The last thing she would have wanted to hear from me was a little explanation of when to use mademoiselle and when to use monsieur and madame. She had just never had the opportunity to actually use them. And I think any of us who have had the experience of traveling

abroad can understand her feeling. We may have studied for a while and may know books in the native language, but when confronted with a real situation, the words suddenly all fly out of our heads and we don't know where we are.

This in essence was what it was all about. I was providing the opportunity for students to have real conversational experience very early on. And I found that this provided tremendous motivation subsequently for going back and looking at the dialogues. The students had been in a situation where they wanted to say something, but weren't sure whether they were saying it right or not. So they reviewed the textbook to be better prepared the next time they found themselves in that situation. So this is what we did in those one period per week sessions. At that time I had no sense of how things were going to turn out. When you start an experimental program, you're never sure, of course, and if things hadn't turned out as they did, I probably wouldn't be here today.

I don't expect most of you are too familiar with statistical procedures, so I'll go over the data very quickly to give you an idea of what's involved. The first table is one of independent variables. The groups were tested to make sure we were starting with relatively comparable samples. Comparable samples insure that if we end up with different results, the differences can be attributed to whatever transpired in between, viz., the experimental process itself.

Table I****

Analysis of Variance, Independent Variables

		Means		
Strategy	N	MLAT	SCAT Verbal	HSPR
E_1	12	85.50	32.67	89.00
E_2	15	80.53	33.21	89.36
C	15	76.80	33.31	83.85
F-ratio		.94	.01	.92

Table II****

Analysis of Variance, Achievement Criteria

		Means				
Strategy	N	CEEB Listening	CEEB Reading	Instructor's Evaluation of Oral Skill	Communicative Competence	Final Grade
E_1	12	9.00	8.08	19.92	66.00	4.33
E_2	15	6.20	6.67	15.87	44.27	3.67
C	15	6.67	6.00	14.80	34.27	3.80
F-ratio		1.11	.56	3.98*	8.54***	2.06

*$p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

****These tables are part of a larger study concerned with achievement and attitudes in foreign language learning, published as: Sandra J. Savignon, Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign-Language Teaching. Philadelphia: The Center for Curriculum Development, 1972. (Distributed by Rand McNally & Company.)

If you look at the line with the F ratios for Table I, you see that there are no asterisks. This means that the groups were judged to be statistically comparable at the outset in terms of aptitude, grade point average, high school percentile rank. None, incidentally, had had any previous experience with French. Table II gives the analysis of variance for the achievement criteria. A set of tests were conducted at the conclusion of the eighteen week period. First, the students had proficiency tests. CEEB refers to College Entrance Examination Board examinations. These were used to test proficiency in listening and reading. Second, we had the instructors evaluate their students on the basis of their oral skill, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency. And then, in the second to last column, you see communicative competence. These were tests especially developed to measure students' ability to function in an unrehearsed interaction, or, in some cases, in improvised monologues which were tape-recorded.

I can describe very briefly what these tests of communicative competence included. Each one lasted for a total of thirty minutes, and the students in all groups were told it was a part of their final examination, so they were all concerned about doing well.

For the first part they had DISCUSSION with a native speaker. We had several topics, such as: a discussion of the Greek life on campus; the preference for a large or small university; and some thoughts on the foreign language requirement. These were intended to be interesting subjects about which the students might have opinions. They were asked to discuss a topic with a native speaker. Then the native speaker evaluated each student on how successful he thought the exchange had been, how much he'd understood and how at ease he felt the student had been.

In the second situation, the INTERVIEW, the student was told to find out as much as he could about the native speaker. He had a limited amount of time - approximately two minutes - to ask any questions he wanted. We said, "Pretend you're going to do a write-up in your school newspaper about this native speaker, so find out anything you want. Write down the information you've learned." We had several native speakers involved in the testing. They were from all over. Some were from Africa, some from France, and one from Belgium. We gave the write-ups to the native speakers and they checked off anything that was incorrect, which left us with how much accurate information the students were able to glean within the time period. So we had an objective measure of the amount of information that they were able to learn. Note that in the second situation it was up to the student to do the probing. If he didn't ask the questions, he wasn't going to find out anything. So he was utterly in control of the situation. The native speaker responded only to what he understood. If he didn't understand, he said he didn't understand, and the student had to find another way to ask the question. That's quite a reversal from most of the oral testing that we do, where it's the teacher always asking the questions.

In the third part of the test, the students were given a topic and were asked to talk about it for a couple of minutes: how they'd spent their vacation, their life on campus - we had a variety of topics that we rotated. This was called the REPORTING function. Note that I've used a variety of different kinds of communicative settings. Some of us, after all, are very comfortable getting up in front of a group. Some of us learn to get up in front of a group. Some of us are much happier in

one-to-one kinds of discussions. So even in our native language we function quite differently, depending on the situation involved. It's wise, then, to provide a variety of communicative contexts for students.

The fourth part of the test was an opportunity to DESCRIBE some ongoing activities. This was lots of fun. We had very elaborate preparations for this particular part of the test. We brought actors into the room to perform a variety of pre-determined actions. They were dressed in a certain way, and they did certain things, like sitting down in a chair, eating an apple, turning on the radio, climbing a ladder, knocking on a door, opening a window. The same number of actions were performed for each student in a sixty minute period. In order to select the actions that might be performed, we asked all the teachers who were teaching this first level French course to give us a list of the kinds of activities that they felt their students would be able to describe, judging from the material that they'd covered in their textbooks. If they'd had the word for apple, or eating, they ought to be able to say, "He's eating an apple." So we would include that.

In order to evaluate these last two parts of the test, we had native speakers who were not in any other way involved in the experiment, and who knew no English, listen to the tapes of these performances. They would write down in French (and it was always accurate French, because they were native speakers) what they'd understood: what activities were being performed in the room, or in the earlier instance, how the student had spent his winter vacation, and so forth. It was easy to objectively score the amount of information that had been correctly transmitted to a native speaker not understanding any English. So that gave us objective scores in addition to the admittedly more subjective impressions of the native speaker who was actually involved in one-to-one communication with the student.

And, as you can see from the statistics reported here, the difference between the three groups is significant at the .001 (this is statistical lingo). In other words, there were very significant differences in the performances of these students in the tests of communicative competence. Yet, there were no significant differences on the standardized proficiency tests of listening and reading. So when measuring communicative competence, we are measuring something different. There's no indication here that those students who had the opportunity for spontaneous expression from the very beginning did any less well on the standardized tests. This is the argument, after all, that a lot of audio-lingual people have put forth. You can't let them speak spontaneously. They won't do as well on the standardized test. Mistakes will become habitual, and so forth. There's no evidence of that whatsoever. Even more, those people who were spending an extra hour a week rehearsing the dialogues and the pattern drills showed no superiority on any kind of test over those who were either involved in cultural activities or in spontaneous interaction. These results cast lots of doubts on the language laboratory program, at least as it was being used in this particular situation.

In addition to these nice statistical results, one of the most rewarding aspects of this experiment were the reactions of the students who were involved. Most of these students were not really there out of desire, but because they had to meet the language requirements of the university. So at the end of this semester of learning French and taking

this very difficult test, particularly for those who'd had no opportunity for interacting spontaneously in French prior to the test, we asked them to write down their impressions of the test that they had just completed. You might think for a minute how your students might react, having been confronted with that kind of situation. What would they say about it? Our students' reactions were very candid. They didn't sign their names. Let me read to you some of the reactions of students from all three groups:

> "If this is an easy test, I just found I couldn't talk my way out of the airport if I flew to France."
>
> "I thought it was fun, but very challenging. It doesn't seem as though we'd had enough practice speaking off the top of our heads."
>
> "Until this evening I was never forced to say anything except answers to questions or substitute phrases. There was no need to search for words. They were supplied. I wish we were forced to do this more often. This is what a language should be."
>
> Another student:
>
> "It seemed very difficult. But this was the first time I'd had the chance to express myself in French. I feel I have an A in French 101, writing, reading, and grammar, but an E in actually having a practical knowledge of the language. I felt that the whole test was difficult, because I was told the whole semester not to think about what I was saying, but rather to see patterns."
>
> And then one other student:
>
> It wasn't exactly what I thought it would be. The test turned out to be "fun" for me because the things I was doing didn't make me feel I was being tested. "Fun"in quotes, because I was disappointed by my performance.

This is the hard core part of my presentation. If you're with me so far, and would like to see some other suggestions for implementing the same kinds of strategies in your own classroom, I have a few suggestions for you. You say, "O.K. What can I do to provide my students with the opportunity for spontaneous interaction?"

First of all, I think we have to come to grips as a profession with the matter of errors, our own as well as our students'. Unless you're a native speaker of the language you are speaking or teaching, chances are pretty good you make them. You may get along fairly well in most situations, but there are still some syntactical problems that come back to haunt you from time to time, or your pronunciation of the French "r" or some similar Spanish pronunciation may be less than perfect. That's

all right. I think by illustration I'd like to look at the word, "error," in its Latin sense, errare: to wander. An error, rather than something to be banished, is evidence of someone's exploration, of someone's wandering, searching, or hypothesis testing. Without errors there's no learning. So I think that as a first step, we have to learn to relax about our own and our students' errors. And then, with honesty on both sides of the desk about being non-native speakers of a language, you're ready to proceed to various strategies designed to augment, or supplement a program which obviously will still include the systematic presentation of grammar.

I think you can go quite a way with play-acting or role playing, as we did here today. It depends on the students; it depends on the age group. It depends, I suppose, on your own imagination as to how many situations you can come up with. But there comes a time when pretending you're in a French cafe or a German railroad station wears thin. It's not as much fun as it once was. So this technique is to be used part of the time. Any classroom activity offers an excellent opportunity for spontaneous interaction. If you're talking about assignments, or assembly halls, talk about them in the language you're teaching - that's real communication. For things that obviously capture the students' interest, use the foreign language. It makes little sense to spend half an hour repeating, "Bonjour, Paul. Comment va-tu?" only to say at the end of the hour, "Go home, now, and read pages ten through fifteen for tomorrow and come back prepared to do exercise B." Also there are a lot of classroom discussions on a variety of topics that you can include. Here, the clue is getting to know your students. Because you can also become bored. Year after year, semester after semester, this can become monotonous unless you exploit to the fullest the particular character of the group with which you're working at any one time. So get to know your students! I've always found that it's a good idea to circulate 5x7 cards at the beginning of each semester on which my students write about their interests - any jobs that they may hold, origins, perhaps. This information will help you make discussions a little more interesting and draw out some talents that may be useful in the classroom.

Finally, there is the use of games which, I think, represents a relatively unexploited potential for generating a variety of spontaneous interactions in the classroom. Games, of course, are not new to the foreign language profession, but most games are rather limited in scope, and have been rather peripheral to the foreign language curriculum: something to do on a rainy Friday afternoon, for example. I'm suggesting, rather, games that exploit to the fullest a learner's communicative competence, and in so doing constitute the very core of the foreign language program. I'm not talking now about scrabble, cross-word puzzles, spelling bees. These things are fun, they add variety, but in essence they are only a more palatable form of pattern practice or memorization. Let me read to you the criteria that I have set for a rewarding type of game that meets the goal of developing communicative skills.

First of all, it provides the fullest amount of emotional involvement possible. Each player has something clearly at stake.

Second, it offers a format that is simple enough to be understood

by all players, yet supple enough to allow for adaptations as needed to suit the needs of the players in terms of age, number, degree of communicative competence, etc.

Third, success in playing the game does not depend on any arbitrary criteria of linguistic accuracy (spelling, pronunciation, word placement, etc.) This is important. It depends, rather, on the ability to use the language to discuss, to explore, to deceive, to explain, to reveal, and in sum to engage in the whole range of inter-personal transactions in which we are involved daily in our native language. Herein lies the authenticity of the exchanges.

I found that games also have the advantage of involving the teacher not as an arbiter or referee, necessarily, but as another player. This element is very important in bringing you closer to your students and in interacting with them outside of the authoritarian role to which we become otherwise easily accustomed.

I can give you one example of a game that I've used that meets all these criteria. It's called, "Mais vous êtes ma femme." That's French for, "Well, you're my wife." It owes its origin to that delightful Ionesco play, La Cantatrice Chauve, where Mr. and Mrs. Smith come to dinner and assume that they haven't met before. Then they start talking and discover that they've both come from the same town on the same train, and then they learn that they both have a daughter and the daughter has one green eye and one blue eye, and Mr. Smith finally says, "Well, you must be my wife," and they embrace. But, in Ionesco's play, you remember, Mr. Smith's daughter's right eye was green and Mrs. Smith's daughter's left eye was green, so they really weren't husband and wife after all! Anyway, to play this you have cards for each player in the family and the family members can be anywhere from three to, let's say, six. For each family there's one card for each member of the family. Each player gets a description of himself on one half of the card. Descriptions can include occupation (butcher, baker, pharmacist, teacher, etc.) age, where he lives, and some additional bit of information about him (drives a car, rides a bicycle, etc.) The other half of each player's card describes the member of his family that he's looking for. It could be his wife, a daughter, a son, a grandfather - what have you. The descriptions can be set in the United States, if you wish, or in a country where the language you're teaching is spoken. The cards are distributed so that everyone knows that he belongs to some family, but doesn't know who the other members are. The players can't show one another their cards. They must memorize them. They go about the room asking one another questions: How old are you; where are you from; etc., until they finally discover that yes, you must be my brother whom I've been looking for. At this point they team up and go looking for the sister that the brother has on his card. It's awfully fun. I've tried it with all ages and everyone has a good time. Teachers can also have a good time and students can talk while you're trying to identify your husband. They're busy communicating with each other away from your often critical ear. So it provides them with lots of opportunity for real exchanges that matter to them. Often the game can create very funny situations. A big football player turns out to be the daughter of one of the girls in the class, for example. Depending on the age group, I've had some students were were delighted, once they'd found each other,

to figure out a family name and name for themselves, and then introduce themselves. They'd say,"I'd like you to meet my father..." It's hilarious; they have a lot of fun; and it's all done in a foreign language.

In conclusion I'd like very briefly to share with you some capsule ideas for games you might like to try which meet the criteria mentioned earlier. I'm hoping that they stimulate your thinking. If you try some and they are successful, you'll be encouraged to work out others. It's the kind of thing that, once it catches on, is hard to stop. We've found this true in the Urbana-Champaign schools. We've had lots of interest generated. Teachers come up with new ideas and then ideas come from their students, and they call each other up and ask, "Have you tried this one yet?" If you try it with a French class, the German students hear about it and are mad because they weren't the first ones to try it. There's a competitive feeling that gets going.

First, for those of you who are practicing classroom teachers, let me offer you some general guidelines for gaming. For these guidelines and the capsule ideas that follow, I want to acknowledge in particular the enthusiastic contributions of Carole Bond and Elizabeth Wachs, foreign language teachers at University High School in Urbana.

1. The game should be planned. This means starting your period with a game sometimes. Don't save them for some time when you want to fill in (It's raining today; we don't know what to do. Let's play a game.) Plan them. Make them an integral part of your course.

2. Explain the game carefully and thoroughly, and give the point system to the students. Don't get involved with hassles with your students over scoring. Make rules and scoring very clear from the outset.

3. Provide the necessary props. This may be a chair arrangement, a dictionary, or whatever. Frequently, a simple kitchen timer is very useful to regulate minutes. It's better than trying to keep time yourself, which leads to disputes.

4. Participate in the game yourself as often as you can. It's a lot more fun.

5. Encourage participation by your students. Reassure them and give lots of praise, particularly to the weaker ones, the shyer ones. This is an opportunity to boost their egos, to get them involved and to tell them how well they are doing. Above all, when you're playing a game, no correcting, no judging. Criticism is out of bounds for this.

6. After you've played a game, evaluate it. Did it work the way you thought it would? Does it need modification? If it's a flop from the outset, drop it. Don't go through with something that's not working. But have something else to try in its place.

7. Don't overdo games. Like any fun thing, it can become overdone and become a bore ("Aw, another game, today?) Keep them infrequent enough that they're still interesting. And let students offer new ideas. They'll get caught up with this and enjoy doing it.

Here are some capsule ideas:

You can use the "Twenty Questions" type for a variety of game strategies. There's "Who Am I?" where you send one student out of the room, decide as a class who he is, the student returns and you give him ten free questions (or, if you like, you can set a timer and give him a certain amount of time - say, two minutes). Then score one point against him for each additional question that he has to ask beyond those ten. A variation of "Who Am I?" is to let the student decide who he is and the others ask the questions. Students can become very creative and have lots of fun with this. Sometimes they're the Tooth Fairy, or Cookie Monster. They have a good time.

You can do a "Missing Word Game," where you have a sentence on the board with a blank in it and the students have to guess the missing word. Or, if you do it orally, say something and clap your hands at the point where there's a blank, and they have to fill in the word.

You're all familiar with "What's My Line." That's a profession guessing game which is also on the model of the "Twenty Questions" type.

Another game we've simply called "Connie's Game," because Connie thought it up. For this game you write a word on a slip of paper and pass it to another who has to tell a story using the word. Then the others have to guess what the secret word is. We've found that students speak for an extraordinarily long time when you give them this opportunity. They don't want the others to guess what the secret word is, so they enbroider. Anything to keep it from being obvious, you see.

This secret word notion also reminds me of the Groucho Marx routine. You can experiment with formats of this sort where you have one student try to get another to "say the secret word," and the other one has to be smart enough to avoid saying it. He tries to circumlocute, you see, and that's just exactly what we want students to learn how to do in a foreign language!

As an aside here, I want to tell you about some techniques for encouraging spontaneous interaction. Some of you may know them. They have worked very well on all levels of instruction. They're not games at all, but ideas which are taken from a book concerned with values clarification. The name of the book is simply, Values Clarification: Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students. The authors are Simon, Howe and Kirschenbaum and it's published by Hart Publishing Co., 1972. This book offers many very nice strategies for getting students to talk about themselves and become acquainted with one another. One of the strategies, for example, is called a "proud-whip." It's called "whip" simply because you go around very fast and get each student to tell something he's proud of. Everyone is proud of something...something that he cherishes, something that he can do well, a collection he has. Other examples of things that they can talk about are: Who is the fairest

adult that you know? What are you afraid of? What makes you angry? These kinds of things will get students talking to and with each other. Here again, it's nice if the teacher participates. Give some of yourself to your students on these occasions.

Another gaming idea is "To Tell the Truth." This is extraordinarily successful. Each student prepares a story which he tells and the others in the class have to guess whether or not it's the truth. The student gets a point for each member of the class that he was successful in fooling. We got some extraordinary stories. One high school student told about finding a body in his back yard, and it turned out to be the truth. They learn interesting things about each other that would never come out otherwise, and have great fun with it.

Another good game, an active one, is called "Mission Impossible." For this you have a team of five students who leave the room and decide on a mission, rehearse it and then return to the room. They split up; each one goes in a corner with one-fifth of the class. The object of the classmates is to discover what the nature of his mission is. The first group to correctly guess the mission wins. You can have a time limit on this.

Another idea is "Paper Bag Dramatics." You must have played this, some of you, at camps. You give each student five objects in a paper bag and let him have ten minutes to prepare a play of some sort, an extemporary play. They don't have to use the words for the objects, but they have to use the objects in the bag.

Something similar that you can use with more advanced classes who are reading literature is to have them talk about some episode or something that happened in a play or novel that they are reading. Frequently this works very well if you let them assume the roles of some of the minor characters in the play. For example, there's a French play called "La Mort du Dauphin." We had two students play the role of servants in the castle and talk about the death of the Dauphin. One student, pretending to work in the kitchen, said she was really glad that brat was dead because he was always in her way and pestering her, and the other one said that the Queen did it, that she murdered him because she wanted a divorce; she wanted to marry somebody else. And they expanded on their own fantasies, put themselves in those roles. They enjoyed it and the other students enjoyed listening.

I'll conclude there. You may have some questions. Or you may have a game of your own that you're willing to share with other people. I hope you will.